

MISSOURI. Conservationist

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Citizen Conservationists

Missouri citizens have a long history of conservation stewardship and generosity. Multiple generations of Missourians and decades of time have created a legacy and history, which are hallmarks

of Missouri's conservation program. As the year winds down, I can't help but reflect on great conservation initiatives and leaders that have helped Missouri lead the nation on many resource management fronts.

Missouri landowners have long been at the forefront of managing their land for the conservation of multiple wildlife species. From the pioneering efforts of Southwest Missouri farmer Eugene Poirot to today's modern farmer and recreational landowners, Aldo Leopold's land ethic is being implemented on Missouri's landscape. Today's landowners are the best educated and most technologically advanced land stewards in our state's history. We also have some of the best conservation opportunities to improve Missouri's landscape through multiple federal and state conservation initiatives.

Past conservation leaders such as E. Sydney Stephens, A.P. Greensfelder and Ed Stegner have laid a foundation that helps today's citizens build and improve Missouri's conservation program. Today's many conservation leaders continue to promote stewardship and generosity that help give all Missourians the opportunity to learn and participate in conservation activities.

Modern deer hunters have donated more than 2 million pounds of deer meat through the years as part of the Share the Harvest program. This program provides much needed protein to less fortunate Missourians and exemplifies the generous giving spirit of many Missourians and partners such as Bass Pro Shops and Shelter Insurance.

Other citizens offer their most precious gift, their time, as they volunteer at nature centers, shooting ranges and other conservation facilities around the state. Conservation volunteers provided the state with more than 250,000 hours last year, which translates into real economic and educational benefits to

our state and its citizens.

Each year, Missourians generously donate land to the people of Missouri. This land, which is held in public trust by the Department, allows all Missourians the opportunity to enjoy a quality outdoor experience.

As we look to the future, how do we build on that conservation legacy of stewardship and generosity? As a Department, we will continue our focus on conservation education and communication. We will continue to expand the Discover Nature Schools program in our public school system. This program helps Missouri youngsters understand today's complex conservation issues. We will continue our long standing position of basing conservation on sound science. By focusing on research and management the Department will build on conservation successes through science based decisions. Citizen input and participation is extremely important as we work hand in hand with Missourians to vision, plan and implement future conservation successes.

Conservation opportunities and challenges will be abundant in the coming year. As we face challenges, such as invasive species or new wildlife diseases, it's nice to know that Missourians are some of the best informed citizens on conservation and continue to grow their land stewardship. They readily give their time, talent and money to promote conservation throughout our state. Missourians care about conserving forests, fish and wildlife. As we celebrate a new year make and take the time to enjoy Missouri's outdoors with family and friends. Our collective conservation future depends on you—the citizen conservationist!

Tim Ripperger, deputy director



OUR MISSION: *To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources.*



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PRO LOGGER

My wife and I would like to thank you for

printing the article about Logger of the Year Matt L'Heureux [November; Page 6]. We were so pleased with the service he provided us clearing the downed trees after the damaging storm that came through our property in Patton Missouri. After he had the trees cleared, he came back and smoothed the ruts and repaired the ground after the heavy equipment damage. We want to thank Matt and his crew for a job well done. He certainly deserves the title Logger of the Year.

Ron and Vivian Williams, St. Peters

GOOD SHEPHERDS

Thank you for your article *Shepherd of the Hills* in the November issue. I am a United States Air

Force veteran of over 21 years and am thankful for the article that connects sacrifice with freedom. It has taken the sacrifice of our military men and women to allow the freedom to be able to appreciate and utilize the natural resources that Missouri offers. A special thanks to our Missouri conservation personnel that do such a superb job of watching over those resources. I really enjoy reading and treasuring the excellent photos in the *Conservationist* and kayaking, fishing and hiking in the Missouri outdoors.

Dennis Manley, Lake Ozark

COOPER HILL MEMORIES

I just read the article on Cooper Hill CA in the November issue [Page 30]. My great-uncle and great-aunt lived in Cooper Hill, Arnold and Liliane Baker. He made a model of the old mill Bonnie Chasteen mentioned in the article and donated it to the state. It was on display at the

capitol in Jefferson City, around the late '60s or early '70s. I spent many wonderful family reunions exploring the beautiful countryside.

Sharon Stidham-Smith, Round Rock, Texas

DEER LONNIE:

Which sense does a deer rely on the most? If a deer smells you but doesn't see you, should you stay where you are or turn in? Most of the time, if I get "snorted," I'll sit for another hour then go on in. When a deer snorts/flags that pretty much clears out the area of other deer, right?

Dallas Gibbs, via Internet

Biologist's note: Good question. They have excellent senses of smell and hearing; not quite as good vision. Having experienced it many times myself, it is frustrating when a deer detects your presence and snorts. If you are detected (snorting), especially late in the day, it may not bode well, but I do not think it means you should give up.

During the rut bucks are moving over large areas and often rapidly. Just because you had a deer snorting at you does not mean every deer that might come by has heard that. You could very well have deer still come through; just hope they are moving in upwind. Good luck this season.—Lonnie Hansen, deer biologist.

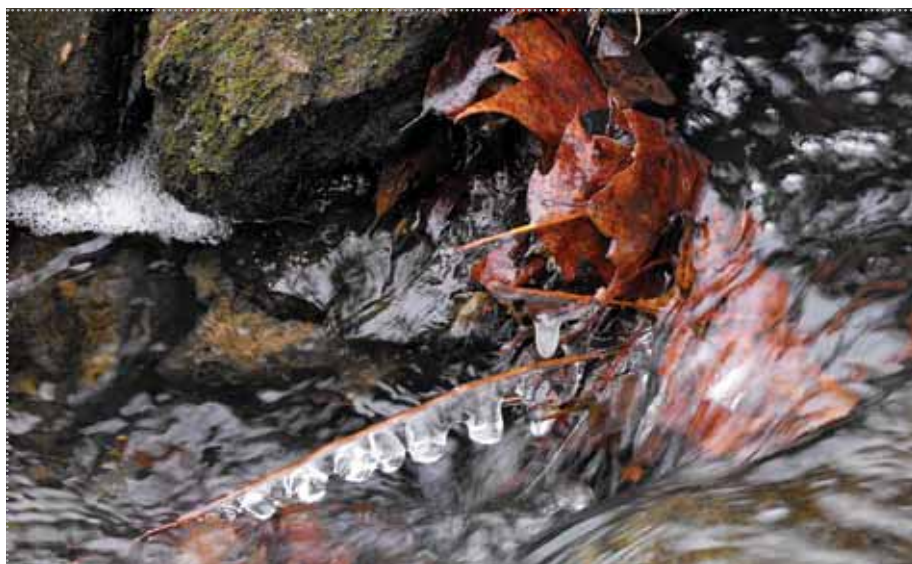
TRUE SPIRIT OF HUNTING

I went out last Saturday for the youth hunt, spent six hours in the stand, and didn't see one deer. That is what deer hunting is all about: waiting, watching, enjoying God's creation. After reading the bit about *8 Plead Guilty in Deer-Dogging Case* [November] it makes me sad for them that they miss the true spirit of hunting.

Graham Stanfill, via Internet

CORRECTIONS

In *Eminence Gets Conservation Boost* [November; Page 5] we wrote that "boaters will have better access to the Current River at Eminence City Park." The sentence should have read "better access to the Jacks Fork River."



Reader Photo

FREEZE FRAME

Jim Hannon of Labadie took this picture as he was running his trap line in a creek near his home. Hannon's wife had decided to join him for the day. "As we walked quietly along the stream checking sets," said Hannon, "we spotted these miniature icicles near the water's surface." Trapping, as well as hunting, fishing and camping are important activities for the family, which includes Hannon's two daughters ages 8 and 9. "These activities play a large role in our lives as we enjoy Missouri in all seasons of the year," said Hannon.



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Youth Deer Harvest Holds Steady

Hunters age 6 through 15 checked 13,263 deer during the early youth portion of Missouri's firearms deer season Oct. 30 and 31. That is the third-largest number in the season's 10-year history and only slightly less than the record.

The first youth season was in 2001, when young hunters checked 6,277 deer. The most ever taken during the two-day hunt was 13,466 in 2004. The harvest during last year's early youth hunt was 13,328.

According to the Missouri Department of Conservation, this year's top counties were Osage with 304 deer checked, Callaway with 277 and Franklin with 266.

The Conservation Department makes it easy to create a lasting reminder of young hunters' first deer. An official First Deer Certificate, complete with congratulations and signature by Conservation Department Director Robert Ziehmer,

is available at <http://bit.ly/9bmk38>. To create a certificate suitable for framing, you need only fill in the hunter's information, print the form and add a photo.

From 2001 through 2007, the youth portion of firearms deer season ran for two days in early November or late October. In 2008, the Conservation Department added two days of youth hunting in January. The harvest during the late youth hunt has been small compared to the early portion, averaging a little more than 1,700.

The Conservation Department recorded no firearms-related deer hunting incidents during this year's early youth season.

The Late Firearms Youth Portion is Jan. 1 and 2.

Still Time to Share the Harvest

Hunters still have plenty of time to share the bounty of Missouri's white-tailed deer

herd through Share the Harvest (STH). The 18-year-old program passed a milestone in 2009, channeling its 2-millionth pound of lean, high-protein venison to needy families through dozens of locally organized STH chapters. STH has achieved this remarkable feat by making it easy and inexpensive to donate venison. Participating meat processors are listed in the *2010 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information* booklet. Donating venison is as easy as taking a deer to any of these processors.

Many hunters have enough venison for their own needs by this time in Missouri's 42-day firearms deer season. With no reason to hunt more, they reluctantly put away their deer rifles until next year, not considering the possibility of extending their own hunting enjoyment while helping feed the hungry.

The antlerless deer season runs through Dec. 5. Muzzleloader season is Dec. 18 through 28. Young hunters get the last shot at deer Jan. 1 and 2. Consider taking these opportunities to spend time outdoors with family and friends and help those less fortunate than you! More information is available at www.MissouriConservation.org/node/2544, or by calling 573-634-2322, or e-mailing mofed@socket.net.

Urban Deer Harvest

During the urban portion of firearms deer season Oct. 8 through 11, hunters checked 587 deer.

Comparing deer-harvest statistics and weather records during past urban deer hunts reveals a strong correlation between weather and harvest. For instance, daily high temperatures averaged 83.7 degrees this year. Hunters shot more than twice as many deer in 2009, when temperatures were 30 degrees cooler. The largest urban-season harvests during the four-day urban hunt have occurred in the years with the lowest average temperatures.

This correlation extends to the November firearms deer season, too. The connection is related to behavior of both deer and hunters. Deer are less active in warm weather. Moving around in warm weather is uncomfortable for deer in October, when they already have grown dense coats to insulate them from winter cold. Hunters know deer are less active and are less inclined to hunt

in warm weather because deer are harder to find. Furthermore, preventing meat spoilage is more difficult in warm weather.

Top harvest counties during this year's urban hunt were Boone with 97 deer checked, St. Charles with 91 and Greene with 86. This year's urban deer harvest consisted of 79 percent does. The goal of the urban hunt is to provide additional hunting opportunities and to manage deer numbers in urban areas.

Fewer Deer-Vehicle Accidents

Statistics from the Missouri Highway Patrol show that the frequency of deer-vehicle accidents peaked in 1996. That same year, the Conservation Department instituted the first antlerless-only

deer season. The goal was to remove enough does from the population to hold deer numbers steady in some areas.

Over the following 14 years, the Conservation Department gradually increased the length of the antlerless season and the availability of antlerless tags. Today, hunters can shoot as many does as they want in all or part of 74 counties. The Conservation Department also has expanded the number of firearms deer hunting days from 22 to 42, instituted an urban deer hunt for antlerless deer and placed counties under antler-point restriction to encourage hunters to shoot more does. As a result, the number of does harvested each year increased from 78,000 in 1996 to 119,000 last year. That is remarkable when you consider that

the number of miles driven on Missouri highways increased from 25,525 million to 47,707 annually from 1982 to 2008, an 87-percent increase.

Scotland County Men Sentenced

Four Scotland County men were sentenced in October on charges related to multiple federal wildlife violations, including illegally shooting a bald eagle and illegally trapping and shooting birds that are protected under the Migratory Bird Act. Agents discovered poles with steel leg hold traps on land owned by Douglas Byrn. Court documents allege that Douglas Byrn trapped and Logan Byrn shot a great horned owl in Scotland County. Doug-

(continued on Page 6)



ASK THE OMBUDSMAN

Q: What are the regulations regarding how long deer and wild turkey meat can be stored in a freezer before using?

A: Turkeys may not be possessed or stored any later than

February 15 of the year following the close of the season when taken. There is no similar requirement for storing venison beyond a certain date. As recently as 1998, there was such a requirement for venison to be used by August 31 of the following year, but a regulations change eliminated it. With more liberal harvest limits for antlerless deer, we felt that it was impractical for many hunters to use all their venison prior to the next year's deer season. Stored deer and turkeys taken in Missouri should be labeled with the taker's full name and address, the date taken and the Telecheck confirmation number.

Q: I had some robins on my property recently. Don't robins go south for the winter?

A: Robins are more common in southern Missouri during the winter but they can also be found, in somewhat lower numbers, in northern Missouri, depending



American robin

on the weather. During the fall, robins form winter flocks and move into wooded areas, where they feed on fruits, berries and invertebrates in the leaf litter. Massive flocks (sometimes more than a million birds) usually return to the same roosting sites each night. These locations are often dense stands of cedars or other evergreens, which provide some thermal insulation as well as predator protection. When spring returns, the flocks break up into breeding pairs and robins become common throughout the state.

Ombudsman Tim Smith will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Department of Conservation programs. Write him at PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573-522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ombudsman@mdc.mo.gov.

las Byrn also trapped a yellow shafted flicker.

Douglas Lecen Byrn, 45, Memphis, Mo., was sentenced to one year of probation and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine on two violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Jared Fuller, 19, of Memphis, Mo., was sentenced to one year of probation and ordered to pay a \$500 fine on one violation of the Bald Eagle Act. Logan Douglas Byrn, 19, of Downing, was sentenced to one year of probation and a \$250 fine on one violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and one count of aiding and abetting the violation of the Bald Eagle Act.

James Fuller, 49, of Memphis, Mo., was sen-

tenced to one year of probation and ordered to pay a \$20,000 fine on one charge of influencing a witness.

Each of the four men also is to perform 40 hours of community service and is forbidden to hunt or possess firearms during probation. The defendants appeared before United States District Judge Catherine D. Perry, in St. Louis. The Conservation Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated the case.

The Department of Conservation works with you to sustain fish and wildlife. If you see a possible poaching violation in progress, immediately call your conservation agent, sheriff or the toll-

free hotline number. Help put game thieves out of business. Dial toll-free 1-800-1111.

Natural Resources Conference

"The Human Element: People, Politics and Conservation" is the theme for the 2011 Missouri Natural Resources Conference (MNRC) Feb. 2 through 4 at Lake of the Ozarks' Tan-Tar-A Resort.

The conference program focuses on helping resource management professionals and citizen conservationists deal with one of the most challenging aspects of their jobs. Registration forms and further information are available at www.mnrc.org.

More Hunters Apply for Hunts Under Quick Draw

Judging by the number of applications for waterfowl hunts, Quick Draw is achieving its original goals.

Quick Draw is a new system for assigning duck-hunting opportunities at the Conservation Department's managed wetland areas. The Department is testing the system this year at Grand Pass, Eagle Bluffs and Otter Slough CAs.

More than 10,500 applications came in for hunting at Grand Pass Conservation Area (CA) during the first 11 days of hunting. The number of daily applicants fell off quickly, from more than 1,400 for the first day of hunting to a little more than 700 on the 11th day. Over the 11-day period, 164 hunters—about 1.5 percent—drew hunting spots. The success rates at Eagle Bluffs and Otter Slough for the first four days of Quick Draw (the only period completed at *Conservationist* press time) were 3.11 and 3.33 percent, respectively.

For more information about Quick Draw, visit www.Missouri

Conservation.org/node/10272. To view the number of hunters applying for and receiving reservations under Quick Draw, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/node/10493.

Instead of requiring hunters to apply for waterfowl hunting reservations weeks or months in advance as the traditional reservation system does, Quick Draw lets them apply a few days ahead of time. Quick Draw assigns 80 percent of hunting slots in advance instead of the 50 percent under the traditional system, and successful Quick Draw applicants find out their number in the order of hunting-spot selection ahead of time, instead of the morning of the hunt.

The Department had several goals for the system. One was to make applying for reservations more convenient, economical and practical for hunters who must drive long distances to managed wetland areas. Quick Draw also was designed to help out hunters whose work schedules are less flexible or who want to introduce school-age hunters to waterfowl-

ing. If it achieved these goals, Quick Draw also might recruit more hunters into a sport with significant entry barriers.

One other benefit to Quick Draw is that it allows hunters to take weather conditions into account when deciding when to apply for hunts.

Quick Draw retains an important feature of the traditional reservation system — the ability of hunters without reservations to draw for a portion of hunting opportunities by joining the "poor line" each morning.

Early-season results showed good success among reservation-less hunters, thanks to smaller poor-line turnouts.



This year's program will feature nationally known speakers, as well as dozens of nuts-and-bolts sessions to provide concrete management strategies for resource managers.

Natural resource professional societies organize the MNRC each year. The event routinely attracts 1,000 attendees and provides a forum for established and aspiring natural-resource professionals to exchange information and ideas and enhance cooperation among government agencies and citizen conservation organizations.

The conference also features an opening-night social, research project poster displays, a student job fair and exhibits by related vendors and service providers and professional and conservation groups.

Donate Asian Carp to the Needy

What do you do with Asian carp that jump into your boat or the ones you take bowfishing? Why not donate them to a food pantry or to neighbors on a fixed income? Silver carp have white, mild-flavored meat that some compare to Chilean sea bass or crab meat. The invasive fish are rapidly joining mainstream cuisine, even turning up at restaurants in New Orleans' French Quarter. Replace the name "silver carp" with "silver fin," and you have a recipe for success. Want to eat the flying fish yourself? Check out www.iisgcp.org/asiancarp/recipes_chapman.pdf for recipes.

Fall Firearms Turkey Harvest

Hunters checked 5,928 wild turkeys during Missouri's fall firearms hunting season Oct. 1 through 31. It was the second-smallest harvest in the fall season's 33-year history.

Top harvest counties were Greene with 199 turkeys checked, Franklin with 157 and Webster with 154.

Resource Scientist Jason Isabelle, who oversees the Missouri Department of Conservation's turkey-management program, said the harvest was about what he would expect based on the number of fall firearms turkey hunting permits sold.

This year's fall firearms turkey harvest included 3,877 hens, or approximately 34 per county. Isabelle said a fall turkey harvest of this size has no effect on the number of turkeys available to

Did You Know?

Citizens partner with MDC to accomplish great conservation work.

Volunteers

- » More than **250,000** hours were volunteered by dedicated citizens last year for conservation activities at nature centers, hunter education courses, shooting ranges and bird monitoring.
- » **132,283** hours were volunteered by more than **67,000** citizens to enhance and restore Missouri streams last year through **4,115** Stream Teams located throughout the state.
- » More than **20,000** hours of volunteer service were donated through the community-based Master Naturalist program last year.
- » About **2,300** volunteer instructors taught hunter education classes last year.
- » More than **66,000** hours were volunteered at MDC facilities last year.
- » For more information on how to volunteer for the Missouri Department of Conservation, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/node/4668.



Volunteer naturalist gives a presentation

hunters the following spring.

"Missouri's wild turkey population is estimated at approximately 500,000 birds," said Isabelle. "Population modeling indicates that as long as fall harvest does not exceed 10 percent of the statewide turkey population, it has little impact on the population. Even when you combine the fall archery and firearms harvests, the total is less than 2 percent of the state's turkey

population. That is well below the 10-percent threshold."

Isabelle said that although turkey numbers are down in parts of the state due to poor reproduction, turkey hunters can still expect some outstanding hunting opportunities during the 2011 spring season. Spring turkey hunting information is available on our website in January at www.MissouriConservation.org/node/4051.

Quail Country

Imperfect landscapes can
be remodeled into great habitat.

by JAN DELLAMANO, photos by DAVID STONNER





Sainte Genevieve and Saint Francois counties are not the first places in Missouri that come to mind when talking about quail country. Most of the terrain is rugged wooded hills, and the type of open land related to quail habitat is limited to relatively small, narrow bottomland and ridgetop fields scattered across the forested landscape. It is not a landscape typically associated with abundant quail populations. But talk to anyone more than 40 years old who hunts, and they will tell you how good the quail hunting used to be.

So where have the quail gone? Talks with landowners and hunters bring up the usual suspects—predators. But we have proof that in spite of whatever influence predators may have, if you create the right habitat, quail will thrive, even in this less-than-perfect landscape. It can happen on private land, even on small acreages, and there are programs that can help.

Bringing Back Buffers

Ashley Williams manages three parcels of land in these counties, and he has successfully restored quail on each. One of them is a 400-acre family farm in southern Ste. Genevieve County along Saline Creek.

The landscape breaks sharply from narrow bottomland fields to steep, wooded hillsides with only 81 acres of fields. The farm has been in his family for more than 100 years, and he gladly recalls stories of hunts when multiple coveys would be flushed in a day. But the farm was different then; it was made up of multiple small fields with brushy/weedy hedgerows and drainages between them, other odd areas that weren't regularly cropped, some hillside pasture and open woodlands.

When Williams took over as the manager of the land, the small fields had been merged into one 70-acre field that was all in crops. There was one 11-acre hillside pasture, and the wooded areas had filled in with maple and cedar. The few odd areas remaining on the farm were in fescue. The only sign of quail was one meager covey that migrated between the farm and the neighbors' lands on each side. Williams' interest in restoring the hunting he enjoyed in years past sent him to the Missouri Department of Conservation for advice.

Ashley Williams on his Ste. Genevieve farm.



**Ashley Williams
hunts quail
on his land in
Ste. Genevieve
with his dog,
Gunner.**



Larry Heggeman, private land conservationist, laid out a plan to restore the edges of the fields to quail habitat. During the planning, a new program called CP33, the Quail Buffer Practice, became available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This program fit perfectly for the Williams farm, and in the spring of 2005, Williams was busy planting the edges of the field to a mix of native grasses, little bluestem and sideoats grama, and wildflowers. Small blocks of trees were cut along the field edges to create brushy cover, a practice known as edge feathering. Nineteen acres of cropland were retired to these quail buffers, including some areas along the creek that probably never should have been farmed, and 5 acres of the hillside pasture were treated similarly, using MDC cost-share because they didn't qualify for CP33.

The first summer after planting seemed disappointing. A serious drought hindered the germination of the native grasses. Weeds grew prolifically, but precious little native grass could be found. Williams was concerned that the planting had been a failure. Then he noticed

that the covey of quail responded anyway. They could now be found regularly on the Williams farm scurrying around in those weeds.

MDC staff urged him to be patient, the planting would take hold in time. Most of us are used to planting crops, lawn grasses or gardens, and we see what we plant in a relatively short time. Native grasses and wildflowers can take 2-3 years to become established, especially if conditions are rough.

By the end of the second summer, the native grasses were common but still scattered and spaced among the weeds. However, more of those "weeds" could now be identified as the wildflowers included in the planting. More important, the quail were increasing! At least two coveys were found regularly. The planting progressed, and the response of the quail encouraged Williams to do some more edge feathering.

Currently, four coveys of quail are thriving at the Williams farm. The native grass has thickened to the point that it is now ready for management activities to maintain the open structure that quail like best. For Williams, that will be burning one-third of the buffer each year, but disking is another option.

Quail hunting has returned, and the farm is a favorite destination during the hunting season for family and friends. Williams reports that the coveys can always be found in or near one of the brushy areas, so he plans to install more in the future. "Sometimes we just let the quail fly, we're so glad to see them again," he says.

As a huge bonus, rabbits run from every one of the brush piles, and rabbit hunting actually exceeds quail hunting as a regular activity. Williams feels a great sense of accomplishment

knowing that his efforts paid off and he has achieved his goal of restoring small game habitat to his farm.

From a financial perspective, Williams reports that farm income is higher with the CRP payments than with farming alone, and his farm has not missed the retired acres. The edges were low in productivity, which is typical, and they did not yield well compared to the inputs required, such as seed, fertilizer, planting, herbicide, and fuel costs. His only regret is that he doesn't have more edges to enroll.

Williams hopes to start work soon on some of the wooded areas to remove cedars and maples, and restore some of the glade and woodland-savannah communities that will help even more quail flourish in the uplands. And, of course, there will definitely be more edge feathering.

Experience Means Success

A similar plan was laid out by Roger Frazier, private land conservationist, for another of Williams' properties, a farm in St. Francois County. Consisting of 130 acres at the very edge of Farmington's city limits and adjacent urban developments, the farm has gone from no quail to two coveys.

Williams' other Ste. Genevieve property of only 30 acres (in a rural housing subdivision of 20-acre lots with some adjacent pastures) now also harbors a resident covey of quail. This one he handled largely on his own. With just a small amount of assistance from MDC, he applied the same practices he learned from the other farms.

Using the knowledge he gained by working on his land, Williams is now an active member of his local Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, and he helps other landowners improve quail habitat on their property.

Due to owning land in two counties, and staffing changes that occurred within MDC, Williams has worked with three different MDC private land conservationists, along with the equally helpful USDA staff in both county offices.

Williams advises other landowners who miss hearing *bobwhite* on their land to get advice from a professional, and to have patience with the process. "It works, whether it's in a program or not, and these people know what they're talking about. Give the quail a chance, and they will come."

Others who have seen the results of Williams' work have taken his advice and headed to their nearest USDA office to ask about the CRP buffer program. There are several buffer practices besides the CP33, and all can be modified to create suitable quail habitat if you emphasize that interest when talking to your planner. A new program called CP38 allows enrollment of entire fields.

If your fields do not qualify for CRP, remember—it is the habitat that brings the quail, not the program. If your real goal is to return quail to your property, then practices and habitat improvements are what matters. Conservation staff can assist you in planning that habitat, and like Williams says, the quail will come. ▲

Ashley Williams' farm has a wildlife buffer between woods and his corn, whereas his neighbor plants his corn all the way to the treeline. Williams had success bringing quail back to his farm because of habitat work like edge feathering.







*Sharing the secrets of success
preserves an outdoor tradition.*

TRAPPING- Education Over Extinction

by LARRY R. BECKETT, *photos by* NOPPADOL PAOTHONG

Children learn how to set a trap during a trapping clinic at Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area near Mt. Vernon. To set a dry land foot-hold trap first (left) drive a stake to hold the trap in place, second (center) apply scent to attract the intended animal and last (right) place the trap. Scent is often applied to the placed trap.

Although trapping has been part of Missouri's heritage for generations, the best locations and methods were historically guarded. This was undoubtedly a habit carried over from the days when trappers made their living by catching furbearers, when they needed the secrecy to ensure their own success. Times and people have changed. Lifelong trappers are now eager to share their experience with beginners in order to sustain the trapping tradition.

Individual trappers, members of the Missouri Trappers Association and the Missouri Department of Conservation conduct trapper education clinics across the state. The workshops encourage novices to try this challenging but rewarding way of pursuing game. They've resulted in a new generation of people who are interested in trapping and understand the vital role that it plays in maintaining healthy populations of all species of wildlife.

Trailblazing Trade

Trapping was born out of necessity. Early settlers did not wallow in the luxuries and abundance of goods that we have today. They trapped

to reduce damages to their crops and livestock and to supply themselves with clothing, food and money from selling furs. The fur-pursuing lifestyle spurred the opening of trade routes and western expansion. Accessibility to the Mississippi and Missouri rivers led to the creation of a trading post in what is now St. Louis. That trading post became the center of fur trading in this country. Missouri remains important in the fur trade industry, with furs valued at more than \$8.5 million taken annually.

Historically, families who trapped taught the next generation, but good trapping locations and tricks of the trade were rarely shared with outsiders. This secrecy, along with the availability of manufactured synthetic products, shrinking backyards and an overall reduction in the connection to nature, led to a decrease in trapping participation over the past several decades. Trapping was becoming a lost skill set, only to be read about in historical documents.

Passing it On

Rather than watch their passion for trapping diminish into fond memories, dedicated trappers are arranging clinics to share their knowledge





with anyone willing to learn. “The mindset of trappers has evolved from protecting their livelihood to sharing their love of the outdoors with others,” says John Daniel, Missouri Trappers Association member and trapping clinic instructor. “We have seen trappers go from those that cared more about the bottom line and the money to those that understand their role as a trapper in managing wildlife and maintaining a healthy balance of predator and prey populations.”

The trapping clinics draw a variety of people with varying degrees of skill. “We have four basic groups of people that attend,” says Doren Miller, fur buyer and vice president of the Missouri Trappers Association. “First are those that are not interested in trapping them-

selves, but just want to learn what trapping is about. Then there are young kids that are not physically able to trap yet. They want to see

“Trapping is renewable. In this day and age when people are trying to be ‘green’ and concerned about their footprint, using these renewable resources makes more sense.”

—Jeff Beringer, resource scientist and furbearer biologist for the state

and feel the fur and learn about trapping. Another group consists of the newcomers that truly want to learn how to trap, how to sell the fur and everything in between. The last group is the experienced trappers. They know the basics of trapping but are looking for little tips and tricks to put more money back in their pocket and make their trapping more successful.”

Clinics provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions, learn about everything from setting traps to tanning hides and get practical hands-on experience. Learning stations can include preparing and dying traps, styles and types of

Modern trapping methods allow trappers to be selective in their harvest and release animals unharmed that are unwanted species or those with low-grade fur. It is important to teach children that they can play a role in sustaining healthy wildlife populations.



During a clinic kids: (top) set the anchor on a submersion set, (center) dug out a spot for a foot-hold trap and (bottom) attached the upper end of the slide wire for a submersion set.

traps, using lures, scents and baits, fastening traps securely and trapping gear and tools.

"Trapping is a skill that is difficult to teach yourself," says Andy Barnes, Lawrence County conservation agent and trapping clinic organizer. "You won't find trapping supplies in most sporting goods catalogs, and getting started can seem like a daunting task. It's impossible to learn everything about trapping in a two-day clinic, but we want to show them how to begin without getting overwhelmed and give them a good foundation to build on."

According to Aurora resident and clinic participant Clint Vaught, the information and skills gained at the clinics are valuable for anyone interested in trapping. "My son came home from school with a flyer and was really excited about the workshop," says Vaught. "I had never trapped, but we both enjoy the outdoors, and I try to do things with him that he gets excited about. We brought along a friend of mine who was an experienced trapper and all three of us walked away from the course having learned a great deal." They plan to attend another clinic this year as a refresher.

The instructors often enjoy the clinics as much as the students. "We take the students out to check the traps and they are just mesmerized by the fact that we caught something," says Daniel. "They are even excited about an opossum. It refuels me as a trapper to share that. Watching them experience their first catch is like reliving my own first. You almost feel that same sense of pride that you felt when you caught your first animal."

Ethics and Science

In addition to trapping skills, the clinics provide an opportunity for students to learn values that apply to all aspects of outdoor activities. "During a clinic, I put a great deal of emphasis on the code of ethics," says Miller. "If a student can learn to respect the animals, respect other people and their property and respect themselves, the other skills will come with time and practice."

The trapping clinics also help correct misconceptions about trapping. Modern trapping methods, including padded and offset jaws on foothold traps, along with the Best Management Practices for trapping created by the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, allow trappers to be selective in their harvest and release animals unharmed that are unwanted species or those with low-grade fur. Class participants get to see firsthand as released animals return to the woods unscathed.

If an animal is selected for harvest and dispatched, a modern-day lesson in "going green" might be in order. Non-trappers sometimes tout the faux pas of wearing fur, but Jeff Beringer, resource scientist and furbearer biologist for the

DISCOVER TRAPPING WITH MDC

Class availability varies depending on time of year, public interest and instructor scheduling. Check with your local regional office (see Page 3 for phone numbers or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/regions) for upcoming trapping clinics or to express interest in having one in your area.

state, puts it into perspective. “If you are wearing a jacket made from synthetic materials derived from oil products, animal habitat was damaged or destroyed to produce it,” he explains. “On the other hand, trapping is renewable. If you go to that same habitat and remove a raccoon, the next year another raccoon is there and the habitat is unharmed. In this day and age when people are trying to be ‘green’ and concerned about their footprint, using these renewable resources makes more sense.”

The Department of Conservation and other wildlife agencies use trapping as a means of research and wildlife management. “Without trapping, the reintroduction of wild turkeys and otters in Missouri, and the success of wolves in the western states, black bears in Arkansas and black-footed ferrets in South Dakota would not have been possible,” says Beringer. “To perform any kind of wildlife restoration or population study on a meaningful scale requires the use of trapping. Anytime you are trying to figure out the natural history of an animal, home range, habitat use, or survival rates, trapping is used. It is the best

method to determine how populations are changing, which in turn helps us to set season lengths and limits.”

The once-locked vault of trapping knowledge has been opened. The trappers of today are not only willing to share information, but often go out of their way to get beginners started. “For our previous clinic, we had instructors from seven different counties. Some of them drove over 300 miles just to help with the class,” says Barnes.

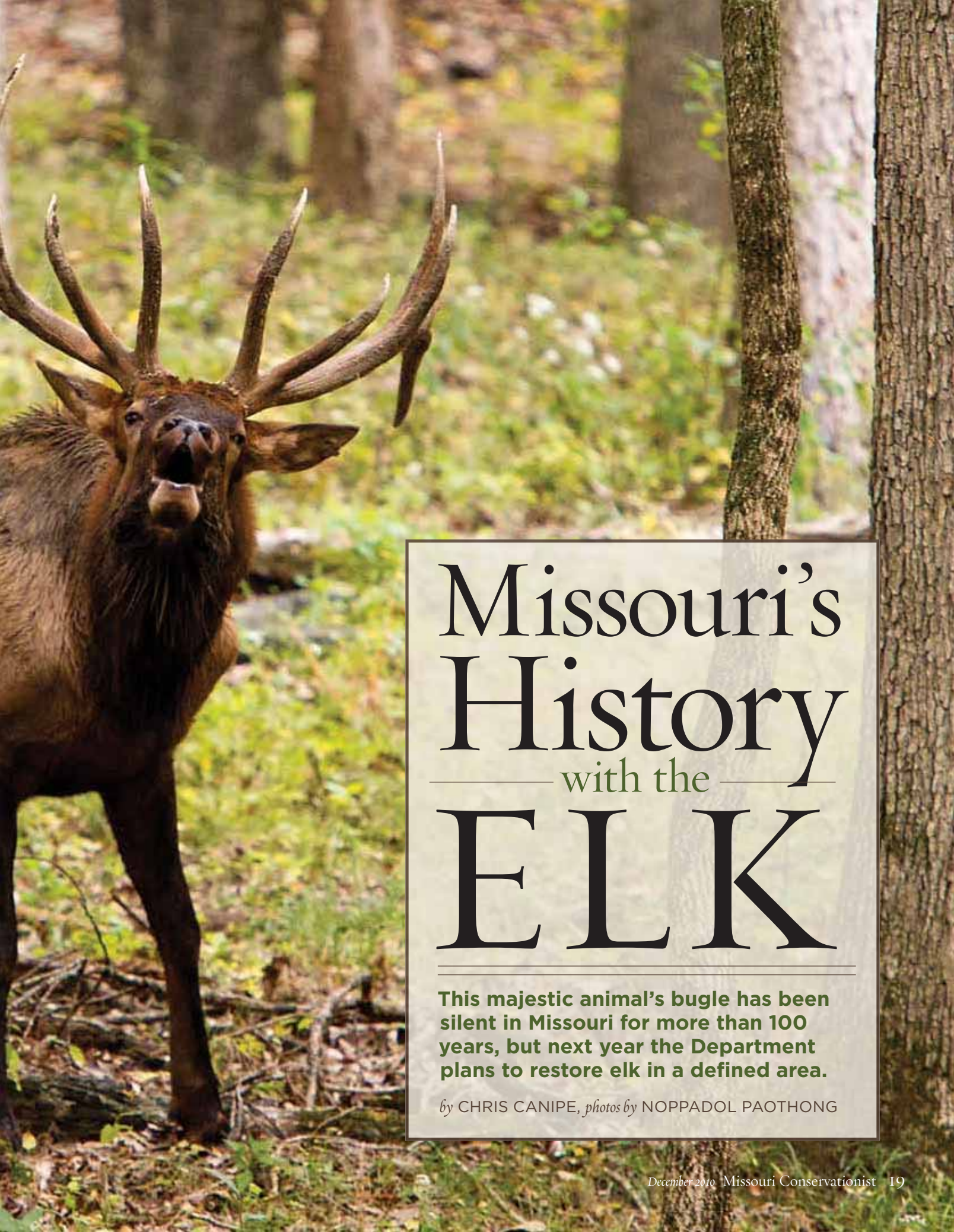
An experienced trapper’s love for his craft cannot be underestimated. “My biggest fear is that trapping will die on my watch,” says Daniel. “That it wouldn’t pass on to the next generation. ... I don’t want it to be something that slips into the category of ancient history because I didn’t do my part to make sure that enough people experienced it and knew it was out there as a way to enjoy the outdoors.”

With enthusiastic mentors available and training classes for all levels, now is the perfect time to learn more about trapping. It’s no secret that it’s another great way to enjoy Missouri’s outdoors. ▲

Children learn how to skin animals as part of the trapping clinic. Trapping is another great way for children to discover nature and enrich their quality of life.







Missouri's History with the ELK

This majestic animal's bugle has been silent in Missouri for more than 100 years, but next year the Department plans to restore elk in a defined area.

by CHRIS CANIPE, *photos by* NOPPADOL PAOTHONG

There's a sound that echoes over the treetops in Arkansas' Buffalo National River park in early fall. It's haunting, and it's ancient, and it went quiet for more than 100 years before returning in the early 1980s—a mere blip in the grand scheme of things. Late September and early October is the rutting season for elk (*Cervus elaphus*), and their call is frequent, day and night.

"It starts off low and peaks out with a real high-pitched squeal," said Cory Gray, elk program leader for the state of Arkansas. "It's the bull's way of keeping his harem together and letting the other bulls know he's around."

On Oct. 15, the Missouri Conservation Commission approved a plan to bring as many as 150 elk to the state within the year.

Northern Arkansas is home to roughly 400 North American elk, a species once found throughout the Midwest but now primarily in the Rocky Mountains and western states. Arkansas first introduced around 100 elk in the early 1980s and confined the population to the Buffalo National River area. Since then, they've kept the head count under 500 through man-

agement practices that include issuing a limited number of hunting permits each summer. The elk's numbers aren't as many as they once were, but they make their presence known in early fall as males gather their harems and compete for dominance.

"They'll clash antlers together and start pushing each other back and forth to see who is the strongest," Gray said. "Bulls will lose a lot of weight this time of year as they try to maintain their harem. It's very energy consuming."

The elk attract a lot of visitors in Arkansas, particularly in the summer when hunting tags are sold, and in the fall when the mating pageantry is on display.

"We have people come from all over to see our elk," Gray said.

Officials in Missouri hope to see similar benefits. On Oct. 15, the Missouri Conservation Commission approved a plan to bring as many as 150 elk to the state within the year. Several other states have had success with similar efforts, and officials here are learning how to manage a successful program. Conservation measures such as bringing back elk pay by both enriching our economy and our quality of life.

The Missouri Department of Conservation has been weighing the possibility since 2000, focusing on roughly 350 square miles of mostly public land in the southeastern part of the state. The original study raised concerns about available habitat and the possibility that elk could carry Chronic Wasting Disease, a neurological disorder that officials worried could spread to deer. After 10 years of study and lessons learned from other successful programs, conservation officials say they're ready. The Department's plan cites stronger protocols for disease testing and no known cases of reintroduced elk spreading disease to deer or livestock.

Conservation Department Director Robert Ziehmer said the Department has actively engaged citizens and organizations to gather input on elk restoration. "A key component of Missouri's plan is the defined restoration zone. Given habitat within this zone, the limited number of elk to be released, established health protocols, monitoring commitment and solid citizen/landowner support, implementation will provide natural resource and recreational benefits," said Ziehmer.



It's been a long time, but Missouri is ready for the elk to return.

A Native Species

Elk were once abundant in Missouri, but their numbers fell as more and more settlers flooded America's untamed west. By most accounts, they were completely eliminated from the state by 1865. They were hunted for their meat, hides and antlers, but that wasn't all that was working against them. Settlement altered their habitat as open grazing spaces and forests were turned into agricultural land, homesteads and cities.

Lonnie Hansen is a resource scientist and deer specialist with the Missouri Department of Conservation and has played a role in the reintroduction study. Hansen says elk were once a prominent part of the state's ecology and would likely still be here had they not been exploited out of existence.

"Elk were pretty well found throughout the state prior to the arrival of European settlers," Hansen said. "They're a native species and certainly that's a charge of the Department—to restore native species."

The North American elk is a striking and majestic creature. Mature males, called bulls, generally weigh 600 to 800 pounds and wear an impressive display of antlers that can weigh up to 40 pounds on their own. Adult females, called cows, weigh 400 to 600 pounds and move in harems. Cows rarely live longer than 10 years and bulls typically live less than 6.

They wear distinctively different coats in summer and winter. In the warmer months, their coat is smooth and reddish brown; during the winter, a lighter brown with much darker hair on the head, neck and legs. Both sexes sport a distinct patch of yellow hair on the rump, and a dark mane of longer hair from the neck to the chest.

Along with deer, they were an abundant source of food and clothing for settlers flooding the region from the east, and they paid the price for the bounties they afforded.

"When settlers started entering the state, these people were just trying to make a living on the landscape," Hansen said. "Elk and deer were preferred targets for providing food and clothing. A lot of killing of elk and deer went to

Elk Facts

Biology Basics

- Elk are members of the deer family, which includes white-tailed deer, mule deer, caribou and moose.
- Male elk are called bulls, females are cows, babies are calves, and yearling males are called spikes. While newborns are only about 35 pounds, males weigh 600–800 pounds when mature.
- Only male elk have antlers. A mature bull's antlers may weigh up to 40 pounds. They grow and shed a new pair every year.
- An elk's top two canine teeth are called ivories. Scientists believe ivories are remnants of saber-like tusks that ancestral species of elk used in combat.
- Elk eat grasses and forbs most of the year. In winter they may also eat shrubs, tree bark and twigs.

Social Behavior

- Cows, calves and yearlings live in loose herds or groups. Bulls live in bachelor groups or alone.
- Elks vocalize in a variety of ways and for different reasons. Bulls may bugle to attract cows or to advertise their dominance to other bulls. They will grunt at cows that stray from their harem. Cows may bark to warn others of danger, mew to keep track of each other and signal their calves by whining softly. Calves in distress will bleat for their mothers.

Mating

- Elk breed in the fall. Bulls gather cows and calves into small groups called harems.
- Elk do not have the potential population growth rates of deer. Elk almost always have a single calf each year as opposed to deer, which often have at least two fawns.
- Bulls wallow in mud to coat themselves with "perfume" to attract cows. They also bugle and rub trees, shrubs and the ground with their antlers to attract cows and intimidate other bulls.
- Calves are typically born in late May through early June. They are spotted and scentless and spend their first few weeks hiding motionless while their mothers feed.

Status

- Prior to European settlement, more than 10 million elk roamed nearly all of the United States and parts of Canada.
- Today, about 1 million elk live in the western United States, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina, and from Ontario west in Canada.

Courtesy of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's website at www.rmef.org

provide skin and meat for the eastern market. As a result, they were very rapidly extirpated."

Missouri's deer population once teetered on the brink of oblivion as well. By 1925, fewer than 400 deer remained in the entire state. It took a concerted commitment to wildlife protection and a national renaissance in conservation prac-

tices to bring the population back. But it was too late for the elk. The influx of settlers across the Midwest left little in the way of untouched habitat. “The last elk was reported in the Bootheel in the mid-1860s,” Hansen said. “The only reason they persisted was because the Bootheel was a pretty rough place for people to live.”

Successful programs have intentionally kept numbers low because the elk’s coexistence with people and the maintenance required for healthy habitat demand it. Once upon a time, healthy grasslands and forests didn’t require any help at all.

“It’s amazing what was here pre-settlement times,” Hansen said. “It was very different than what it is now.”

Habitat Management

Missouri’s mix of wooded terrain and grasslands make an ideal habitat for elk, as they are both grazers and browsers. Like white-tailed deer, they enjoy shrubs, leaves and plants with woody stems, but unlike deer they mostly stick to grasses. Missouri’s abundance of both made the region hospitable.

Of course much has changed since the days when elk roamed the state in large numbers, and careful management and containment is an important part of any successful reintroduction.

In Arkansas, efforts have included the clearing of pastures for grazing, the planting of winter wheat, clover and orchard grasses, and controlled burns to keep the timber stands healthy.

Missouri’s restoration calls for similar measures. Periodic tree thinning and controlled burns will help maintain open tree canopies and open up bountiful stretches of grassland.

Key points to remember about elk restoration in Missouri:

- Elk is a native species to Missouri, and restoring native species holds many benefits.
- Elk in eastern states tend to be non-migratory and utilize available habitat,
- Limited number of elk will be released,
- Limited area with quality habitat,
- Elk will be radio collared and closely monitored,
- 79 percent of the elk restoration land is open to public access,
- The Department is committed to addressing elk in unwanted locations outside the restoration zone including harassment techniques, trapping and relocating and/or euthanizing elk, and
- Hunting is proposed to be implemented as soon as possible after the elk become established
- Elk restoration will include health protocols, such as disease testing, to ensure the health of domestic livestock and other wildlife.

Bull elk compete for dominance in the harem in the fall when mating season begins. Only bulls have antlers, and they clash together as the elk push each other back and forth.

The plan also proposes cost-share incentives for landowners who wish to establish grasses and legumes such as Timothy, orchard grass and clover.

Missouri’s elk will each be fitted with a radio transmitter to allow officials to monitor their movement and determine how they use the space. This will help officials keep tabs on their numbers and institute appropriate hunting guidelines to ensure the population is compatible with the available habitat and public interest. Furthermore, if elk wander outside the restoration zone and onto private land





where they are not wanted, the Department will immediately respond to landowner complaints and work to resolve the issue.

Dave Pace is Missouri's volunteer state chair for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The organization has more than 150,000 members nationwide and is committed to maintaining healthy natural habitats for elk and other wildlife. Missouri's plan calls for the organization to help defray some of the transportation and logistical costs associated with bringing elk to Missouri. Pace applauded the state's efforts and said habitat improvements made for elk have other benefits.

"A piece of ground conserved for an elk will benefit other wildlife as well," he said. "I'd like to see us be able to pass this down to future generations."

Pace lives in Salem, roughly 30 miles from Peck Ranch and says he's not expecting the animals to ever wander that far.

A Cooperative Effort

The original feasibility study conducted in 2000 identified Peck Ranch Conservation Area in southeast Missouri as an ideal site. The large forested area includes parts of Carter, Shannon

A bull and cow elk at Lone Elk Park. Missouri's mix of wooded terrain and grasslands make an ideal habitat for elk, as they are both grazers and browsers.





DAVID STONNER

The Department considered Peck Ranch CA in southeast Missouri as an ideal site because of its mixed habitat, low number of roads, and low density of crops and livestock. Stegall Mountain, above, is part of Peck Ranch.

and Reynolds counties and is made up of mostly public land. The Department considered the area suitable because of its mixed habitat, low number of roads, and low density of crops and livestock.

“We’re looking at an area of 346 square miles, plus or minus,” Hansen said. With an estimated goal of 300 to 400 elk, that would mean a density of one animal per square mile.”

Nearly half (49 percent) of the elk restoration zone is held in public trust by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the National Park Service or the United States Forest Service. Another 27 percent is private land maintained by the L-A-D Foundation, which works to maintain the property through sustainable forestry and woodland management. Another 3 percent is protected by the Nature Conservancy, which works to protect ecologically important lands. Their combined efforts have significantly improved the region for elk since the early 1990s.

Back in Buffalo River National Park, Gray said the success of Arkansas’ elk program is a

result of such cooperation.

“For Arkansas, it was a partnership between the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the residents of Newton County,” Gray said. “Now it’s a partnership between Buffalo River National Park, the Forest Service and several organizations. It’s a wide range of partnerships.”

Much has changed since thousands of elk roamed what is now Missouri, and much has changed since the last native elk was spotted in the state 150 years ago.

“We got away from the attitude that deer were nothing but a piece of meat on the table,” said Hansen. “That old mentality that we can’t possibly kill them all, but we did.”

It was people who exploited the elk until there weren’t any more, and it was people who changed the landscape to the point it was no longer hospitable. But Missourians care about conserving wildlife. With that kind of support, and with a little effort, cooperation and the restorative hand of sound forestry management, elk will once again have a place in Missouri. ▲

Conservationist

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Wood Duck

Head outdoors to see this duck sporting bold colors usually associated with tropical birds.



Female wood duck

THIS AUTUMN I was photographing several young turkeys that had recently discovered the joys of my freshly-planted food plot. As I sat in my portable blind I heard the familiar cry of a wood duck down the hill about a 100 yards in the direction of our tiny pond. Built in 1945, our pond has seen its best days for fishing but now

wooded, shallow and covered with duckweed it provides a secluded feeding area for wood ducks. In the spring and fall, the woodies, as they are known to hunters, fly back and forth between our little pond and their roosting and loafing area on the nearby Bourbuese River. As I listened to the lonely whistle of the drake wood duck, I made a mental note to eventually move my blind to the pond and pursue some fresh images of what many consider Missouri's most beautiful waterfowl species.

The drake wood duck (*Aix sponsa*), when in breeding plumage, is almost gaudy-looking with its iridescent green head streaked with purple and topped with a purple crest. A brilliant white patch lies across the throat and continues upward across the side of the face in two streaks. The chest is a deep red, almost maroon, spotted with triangles of white, and the bill, also red, has a lovely yellow border at its base. Finally, the eye, which is the wood duck's most striking feature in my opinion, is brilliant red. As with most waterfowl species, the hen's beauty is more subtle with grays and browns on the head and body, a white ring around the eye and wings of pinkish-purple and blue with a metallic sheen.

Wood ducks can be found year-round in Missouri but most migrate north and south with the seasons as do other waterfowl. As a game bird, wood ducks are considered fine table fare and are second only to mallards in popularity. Wood ducks begin nesting in the spring in tree cavities along forested stream corridors and wooded wetlands. When the young hatch they jump from their nest to the water or ground below, sometimes from dizzying heights, without injury. Once on the water, the mother does her best to protect her young, often feigning injury to passing canoeists in order to distract them from her vulnerable fledglings. Wood ducks feed on seeds, aquatic invertebrates, acorns and aquatic vegetation, including duck weed—the specialty of the day at our little pond!

A few days after hearing the wood duck's cry, I decided it was time to make my move, so late that evening I set up my blind in a copse of cedars at pond's edge. A few minutes before daylight, I watched four woodies drop out of the sky, then six more, then another group of four. Soon, there was a cluster of 34 billed beauties gorging themselves on duckweed right at my feet. My camera got a serious workout that morning, and I didn't make it back up the hill to my house until almost 9 a.m. when, finally sated, the entire group took flight back to the Bourbuese River.

—story and photo by Danny Brown

Male wood duck



Daniel Boone CA

Recreation opportunities abound at this large, forested area about an hour west of St. Louis.



ALTHOUGH MANY DECEMBER visitors to Daniel Boone CA will be aiming for whitetails during the archery and muzzleloader portions of deer season, this 3,520-acre area is open to several other popular winter activities, including birding, hiking, camping and fishing.

Daniel Boone Conservation Area is in western Warren County, about seven miles southwest of Jonesburg, and within a one-hour drive of St. Louis. The area is named in memory of the great pioneer and woodsman. In 1943, former Conservation Commissioner A.P. Greensfelder, an ardent conservationist, donated the original acreage for this area to the Conservation Department. Later purchases brought the area (including the 923-acre Razor Hollow Natural Area) to its present size.

This area receives intensive restoration and management that promotes overall natural community health. As it was in Daniel Boone's day, the area is rich in uncommon, habitat-specific plants, such as heart-leaved plantain and fragrant ladies' tresses orchids, and woodland animals, including white-tailed deer, turkey, squirrel and ruffed grouse.

Birders can expect to find great opportunities for viewing grassland, shrub- and forest-dependent bird species, such as the pileated woodpecker.

A hike on the area's seven-mile multi-use trail will lead through deep valleys, glades and rugged wooded hills. While the multi-use trail is open to hiking throughout the year, it is closed to mountain biking and horseback riding from the beginning of fall turkey season through the end of spring turkey season.

In the summer, natural history enthusiasts will enjoy opportunities to encounter such elusive woodland creatures as the wood frog and spotted salamander. In addition, seasonal small waterfalls will delight visitors when the weather has been rainy or snowy.

Camping is allowed on 10 designated areas and in the horse-staging area (12 sites grouped together). Aside from deer, hunters will find good populations of squirrel and turkey to pursue during season. Anglers can cast for bass and catfish in the area's four fishing ponds, as well as pursue redear sunfish in lakes One and Two.

As always, check the area's Web page for map, brochure, regulations and possible special notices before visiting.

—Bonnie Chasteen, photo by David Stonner

Recreation opportunities: Birding, camping, fishing, hiking, biking and horseback riding in season, hunting and nature appreciation

Unique features: This is a predominantly forested area with primitive camping, picnic area, four fishing ponds and a multi-use trail.

For More Information

Call 636-441-4554, or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/a4603.





Hunting and Fishing Calendar

FISHING

OPEN **CLOSE**

Black Bass (certain Ozark streams, see the *Wildlife Code*)

5/22/10 2/28/11

impoundments and other streams year-round

Nongame Fish Giggling

9/15/10 1/31/11

HUNTING

OPEN **CLOSE**

Coyotes

5/10/10 3/31/11

Crow

11/01/10 3/03/11

Deer

Firearms

Antlerless

11/24/10 12/05/10

Muzzleloader

12/18/10 12/28/10

Late Youth

1/01/11 1/02/11

Archery

11/24/10 1/15/11

Furbearers

11/15/10 1/31/11

Groundhog

5/10/10 12/15/10

Pheasant

North Zone

11/01/10 1/15/11

Southern Zone

12/01/10 12/12/10

Quail

11/01/10 1/15/11

Rabbits

10/01/10 2/15/11

Squirrels

5/22/10 2/15/11

Turkey

Archery

11/24/10 1/15/11

Waterfowl

please see the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* or
see www.MissouriConservation.org/7573

Wilson's (common) snipe

9/01/10 12/16/10

Woodcock

10/15/10 11/28/10

TRAPPING

OPEN **CLOSE**

Beavers and Nutria

11/15/10 3/31/11

Furbearers

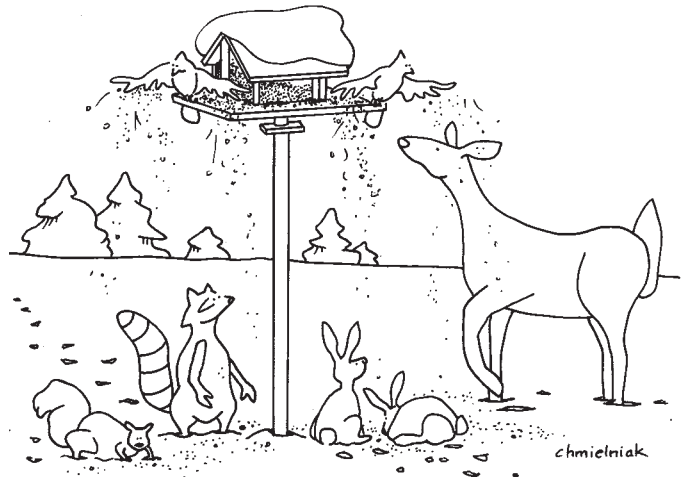
11/15/10 1/31/11

Otters and Muskrats

11/15/10 2/20/11

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information*, the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Hunting Digest*. For more information visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8707 or permit vendors.

The Department of Conservation's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800-392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/.



Goodwill to all.

Contributors

LARRY R. BECKETT is a writer, photographer and videographer. Born and raised in southwest Missouri, he developed an appreciation for hunting at a young age and enjoys the additional challenge of pursuing game by alternative methods.



CHRIS CANIPE is an information graphics designer and freelance writer, as well as a singer and songwriter. He enjoys spending time outdoors running, biking, canoeing and playing disc golf.

JAN DELLAMANO, private land conservationist for Ste. Genevieve and St. Francois counties, enjoys the outdoors and spends most of his time helping others improve wildlife habitat. He works on everything from small naturescapes to full-scale wildlife management plans and helps restore natural communities like glades.



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Facebook is another great way to get information about nature and outdoor recreation in Missouri.

WHAT IS IT?

Lake sturgeon

On the back cover and right is a lake sturgeon by Noppadol Paothong. The largest of Missouri's three sturgeons, it is rare and endangered in our state. One way to identify it is by its conical (not shovel-nosed) snout. And despite its name, in our state this fish is almost always found in big rivers—not lakes. MDC continues to study sturgeon and develop management practices to prevent overharvesting and improve conditions for this fish. To learn more about lake sturgeon, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/node/1003.



AGENT NOTES

Nuisance wildlife and trapping in Missouri

TRAPPING HAS BEEN a tradition for hundreds of years in Missouri. While fur prices have dropped, the need for trapping has not. An overabundance of furbearers creates problems resulting in a different style of trapping. The Conservation Department strives to work with you to maintain healthy furbearer populations.

Nuisance wildlife trapping may be an issue at your home. Conservation agents receive nuisance complaints on a regular basis and lend support and equipment as needed.

I recently received a call from a woman in Van Buren who had an “aggressive” opossum chasing her from her shed to her porch. This woman lived in town, so I brought

a 10-inch live trap and placed it just inside the door to her shed. I wasn't sure where the opossum was hiding, but this was the last place she saw it. Using

a can of cat food, I set the trap. I had hopes of catching the critter that evening, but figured I would catch a stray cat first. Much to my surprise, the next morning the opossum was in my trap, and the woman's troubles were over.

Whether the nuisance animal is a skunk, opossum, raccoon, etc., there is a solution. It isn't always as easy as it was with the opossum, but creativity and patience will pay off. A few tricks will help get you started:

- Cat food is great bait to start with.
- Traps need to be big enough, just not too big!
- Set your trap close. The closer to the critter's hideout the better.
- Don't get frustrated! You'll catch it!

Property owners retain the right to protect their property. Local Conservation Offices and Conservation Agents are there to help.

Remember to stay safe and always enjoy Missouri's great outdoors.



David R. Baldridge is the conservation agent for Carter County. If you would like to contact the agent for your county, phone your regional Conservation office listed on Page 3.

WHAT IS IT?

Our photographers have been busy exploring the intricacies of the Missouri outdoors. See if you can guess this month's natural wonder. The answer is revealed on the inside of this back cover.



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Free to Missouri households

